United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ UNHCR condemns killing on Saturday of staff member in central Bosnian town of Vitez; appeals to all sides in conflict in former Yugoslavia to honour assurances of safe access for humanitarian operations.

+ Special Committee against Apartheid to hold Joint North American/European Non-Governmental Organization Consultation on 30 and 31 August in Geneva; to focus on development needs in South Africa.

+ Special Coordinator recommends that membership of Conference on Disarmament be expanded from 39 to about 60 States.

+ Cost of meeting emergency needs of population affected by recent shelling of southern Lebanon estimated at $29 million, according to report of United Nations humanitarian needs assessment mission.

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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sadako Ogata yesterday condemned the killing of a UNHCR staff member in the central Bosnian town of Vitez. Boris Zeravcic, who worked for UNHCR's Zenica office as a driver and interpreter, was shot dead on Saturday while driving a clearly identifiable UNHCR armoured vehicle through the town. The other members of the UNHCR team, which had gone to Vitez to arrange an aid delivery scheduled for Monday, were not injured.

Mrs. Ogata said the cowardly attack on unarmed UNHCR staff was an example of the brutal violation of international humanitarian standards in the former Yugoslavia, and appealed to all sides in the conflict to honour assurances of safe and unhindered access for humanitarian operations.

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The Special Committee against Apartheid will hold a Joint North American/European Non-Governmental Organization Consultation on 30 and 31 August in Geneva. The Consultation, which is being organized jointly with the

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Non-Governmental Organization Subcommittee on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Apartheid and Decolonization, will bring together some 50 representatives of non-governmental organizations from North America, Europe and North Africa. Representatives of United Nations agencies will also participate.

The Consultation will focus on the social and economic development needs in rural and township communities in South Africa and role of international non-governmental organizations in helping them meet those needs.

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The Special Coordinator responsible for negotiations to improve the structure and functioning of the Conference on Disarmament has recommended that its membership be expanded from 39 to about 60 States. Paul O'Sullivan (Australia) reported to the Conference in Geneva on Thursday that there was a general acceptance of the need to expand membership, while maintaining the Conference's essential character as a negotiating body.

Members wanted decisions to continue to be taken by consensus, he said, and the Conference to concentrate on developing agreements and treaties in the field of security, arms control and disarmament.

The expansion was proposed in response to a demand that the Conference be made more representative following the end of the cold war, Mr. O' Sullivan said. The recommendations were balanced in geographical and geostrategic terms. If they were accepted, new members could begin participating at the start of the 1994 session.

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The estimated cost of meeting the emergency needs of the population affected by the recent shelling of southern Lebanon is almost $29 million, according to a report by a United Nations inter-agency humanitarian mission which visited the area from 8 to 13 August.

Some 350,000 people were forced to flee their homes during the shelling, many of them farmers who had lost their crops as a result of the displacement. The report states that about 70 villages were destroyed or damaged. Some 1,500 families had lost their homes and a further 1,000 houses had been partially destroyed.

The immediate needs of those affected has largely been met through existing emergency supplies in Lebanon and yesterday a flight organized by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs brought in an additional 35 tons of basic relief items.

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